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**To:** Microsoft ATR  
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As a person that has been using computers since the early eighties, I personally welcome the changes that Microsoft has developed. People tend to forget that before Windows 3.11 and then Windows 95 was released computers were fairly difficult for average users to deal with. The ease of use of these operating systems helped substantially with the boom in computer sales and usage to the everyday consumer.

Even with these advances however many manufacturers of computer systems insisted on adding their own software to systems to make them even \*easier\*. From a purely technical standpoint many of these added features made using the system much more difficult due to incompatibilities and poorly written software that made the operating system unstable. Microsoft in order to protect itself did the right thing by dictating what should be on the desktop and how the user should see the system. It is their operating system and it should be work as they see fit.

The inclusion of Internet Explorer with Windows has only improved the useage of the internet. When I first ventured into the world that is the internet I was only provided with a copy of Netscape Navigator...version 1. IE did not even exist yet. For years I used Netscape only, even after IE came out because Netscape offered a superior product, and it was free. However with version 4 of IE that changed. I was able to download another free browser that offered a faster cleaner web experience. In comparison Netscapes offering was slow and clunky. Therefore I quit using Netscape and have stuck with IE ever since. Once IE was melded with Windows 98 it only improved the operating system, makeing navigation in Windows easier. Netscape as a free download still worked under Windows though and in no way did Windows 98 + Internet Explorer keep me from using Netscape Navigator...instead it was the slowness and instability of Netscapes browser that let IE change my opinion of it. Some argue that Microsoft cripples the Netscape browser when installed on Windows systems. I have never personally experienced this as Netscape on Linux is just as slow and problematic as it is on Windows.

To me without Microsofts efforts we would still be using many diffrent incompatible systems and the computer boom never would have happend. As it stands today we have three desktop platforms, Microsoft, Apple, and the many diffrent Linux Distributions. Microsofts monopoly of the desktop has offered us the ability to finally have a compatible platform without the worries of transferring files between numerous types of computers and operating systems. Apple gives us a similar platform offering just as much as Microsoft albeit at prices most people reject. Which leaves Linux as an upstart that may one day work out its usability issues but today still offers more incompatibilities than anything else.

Microsoft should be allowed to dictate how its operating system is distributed on computer systems and what software can and cannot be bundled with it. Without this we will be thrown back to the years where there was more time spent with the headaches of incompatibility and instability than with productivity. Microsoft has done nothing but improve the lives of computer users and should not be punished for this. Instead they should be thanked for pulling all of us out of the dark ages of computers and continuing to provide us with more software features.